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LETTER DATED 4 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit the text of a statement issued on 4 September 1996 by the Government of the Russian Federation (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have that text and this letter circulated as an official document of the United Nations Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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Annex

Statement issued on 4 September 1996 by the Government of the Russian Federation

Tension around Iraq continues to mount. On 4 September, United States armed forces launched another missile attack against military targets in that country. This is creating further complications in the effort to move the present crisis towards political solutions.

It is a matter of grave concern that Washington is, to all intents and purposes, arrogating to itself the role of supreme arbiter. As a matter of fact, it is seeking to supplant the Security Council, which under the Charter of the United Nations possesses the exclusive right to authorize the use of force. It is in that context that one should view the unilateral decision by the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to extend the "no-flight zone" in southern Iraq. Such actions have set a dangerous precedent, are incompatible with international law and are unacceptable.

Military action inside and around Iraq must cease. The Russian Federation urgently calls on all the parties to renounce the logic of force and to start moving towards a political settlement of this crisis.